THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) No.

(b) to (c) China illegally claims approximately 90,000 square kilometres of Indian territory in the State of Arunachal Pradesh. China did not give a visa to an officer of the Arunachal Pradesh cadre of the Indian Administrative Service to visit China in May, 2007 on a study tour organised by the Department of Personnel and Training. Government of India have conveyed its regret and disappointment to the Chinese side on this occasion through the Chinese Embassy in New Delhi and the Indian Embassy in Beijing. Government have also reiterated their position that Arunachal Pradesh is an integral part of India.

Language for filling passport forms

†1905. PROF. RAM DEO BHANDARY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether passport forms filled in Hindi are accepted by the passport offices under his Ministry;

(b) whether entries are made bilingually (English and Hindi) in the passports; and

(c) if not, by when the aforesaid process would be made in accordance with the official language policy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) The passport application forms filled bilingually (English and Hindi) are accepted by the passport offices.

(b) At present entries in the passports are made in English, as the passports are prepared as per guidelines of the International Civil Aviation Organization. According to "global inter-operability" of passports, entries in the passport booklets are to be in a language, which facilitates inspection of international travellers at borders. Currently for Machine Readable Travel Documents, it is specified that the entered data in the passport should be in Latin alphabet characters, *i.e.*, A to Z, and Arabic numerals, *i.e.*, 1234567890.

(c) The Ministry is currently trying to streamline the passport issuance system to meet the rapidly growing demand of passports and to issue passports promptly. On implementation of these plans, the Ministry would consider bilingual entries in the passports.

Patents by US patents and trade mark office

1906. SHRIMATI SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR:
SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of "Patents" that have been issued by the US Patents and Trademarks Office, in respect of traditional Indian herbal (basic ingredients) of

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

medicines, ancient Indian knowledge and practices like Yoga, during the years 2005, 2006 and till 30th June 2007;

(b) the steps that have been taken by Government to stop this violation of our age-old ethos and forest based treasure either through diplomatic channels or recourse of legal action; and

(c) the number of such patents that have been cancelled during this period?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The US Patent and Trade Office (USPTO) have not granted any patent on Yoga postures or practice *per se*. The USPTO have granted 168 patents to date on devices and equipment that may be used in conjunction with Yoga. Twelve patents, which specifically indicate that they are in respect of traditional Indian herbal knowledge, have been assigned to the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, New Delhi.

(b) to (c) As no patents have been granted specifically on Yoga, the matter has not been taken up with the US authorities. The general issue of traditional knowledge is on the agenda of the Indo-US Intergovernmental Trade Policy Forum.

Welfare fund in UAE

1907. MS. SUSHILA TIRIYA: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to establish a welfare fund in UAE for the Indian communities living there;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether such types of facilities are given in other countries; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) and (b): Government proposes to establish a Welfare Fund for the Indian Overseas Workers in general. The details are being finalized.

(c) and (d) Welfare funds for overseas workers exist in other labour sending countries such as the Philippines, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. These Funds are utilized for various welfare services to the overseas workers and returnees.

BSUP and IHSDP

1908. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry is implementing Basic Services for Urban Poor (BSUP) and Integrated Housing and Slum Development Programme (IHSDP) schemes in the country to provide houses to the urban poor;

(b) if so, whether the proposal of the State Government of Andhra Pradesh to provide sanction to additional one lakh houses under the above schemes has been approved;